

CITY OF LANSING SNOW CLEARING STANDARDS

A Friendly Reminder

Who: The City of Lansing is asking for your help in making public sidewalks safe.

What: City Ordinance Section 1020.06 requires property owners to not allow any snow or ice to remain on any public sidewalk adjacent to their property for more than twenty-four (24) hours after snow has fallen or ice has formed.

When: Sidewalks must be kept clear at all times except during a weather event in which snow and ice are continuously accumulating. Property owners will have **twenty-four (24)** hours to clear snow or ice after it has fallen or formed on the public sidewalk.

Where: The public sidewalks within the City of Lansing, including those sidewalks along the front of your property. Those on corner lots are responsible for both the front and side yard sidewalks, including the sidewalk ramps at the intersection adjacent to their lot.

Why: Public sidewalks need to be free of snow and ice to provide a safe route for everyday use by your neighbors, postal carriers, school children, the physically challenged, elderly and others.

If the public sidewalk is not cleared of snow and/or ice within the allotted time period, a City inspector may issue a violation notice. The notice will be posted on the property.

If the sidewalk has not been cleared twenty-four (24) hours after notification, City crews may clear it and the property owner will be assessed the cost of the work which includes an administrative fee.

The first twenty (20) minutes of clearing by the City currently costs \$149.00, and each additional twenty (20) minutes costs an additional \$70.00.

The costs associated with the City's removal of snow and/or ice from the sidewalk adjacent to your property will become a lien upon your property. This lien will be in the form of an assessment. The city will follow the State required assessment process, which includes a public hearing where you may plead your case to the City Council.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

Q: What is the updated ordinance passed on November 22, 2014 by City Council?

A: The updated snow ordinance states that if snow and ice on public sidewalks is not cleared within 24 hours after the end of snowfall, the Public Service Department may leave a violation notice on the property. If the sidewalk has not been cleared on recheck after an additional 24 hours has passed, the Public Service Department may clear it at the property owner's expense. The City will also perform a general notification by publication to all residents before the first

snowfall of the year that snow and ice must be removed from their sidewalk or they will be subject to the cost of removal.

Q: Why do I have to remove snow and ice from the “public” sidewalk?

A: Like many communities throughout the snowier regions of our country, there are limited resources available to handle the removal of snow and ice from the public street system and sidewalks. Since the 1890’s, our community has relied on property owners to maintain the public sidewalks adjacent to their land, freeing up valuable City resources to clear the streets.

Q: The snow stopped at 11:00 this morning. How long do I have to clear my sidewalk?

A: By City Ordinance you have until 11:00 tomorrow morning, 24 hours after the end of a snow event.

Q: How much snow or ice does there have to be before I need to clear the sidewalk?

A: The Ordinance does not specify an amount. The intent is that the full width and length of sidewalks, including ramps, are generally free of snow and ice and are “safely passable” for pedestrians, including children, the elderly, visually and physically impaired, wheelchair users and other individuals with assistive mobility devices. “Safely passable” means a surface free from drifts, snow ridges and as much ice and snow pack as is practical and can be traveled free from harm or risk, secure from threat or danger, harm or loss. Safely passable does not require a surface to be completely dry.

Helpful hint: The earlier and more frequently you do clear your sidewalk, the easier it is to keep free from snow and ice.

Q: Will the ordinance be enforced on weekends or City holidays?

A: Technically, the requirements for keeping your sidewalk clear are continuously in place. However, enforcement activities will generally occur during normal business hours of the City. Under some conditions removal of snow and/or ice may occur during the early evening hours.

Q: What if I don’t clear my sidewalk?

A: A City Inspector may post a snow violation notice on the property stating non-compliance. Twenty-four (24) hours after posting, the sidewalk will be rechecked and if it is still not cleared, it may be cleared by the City and the cost of clearing assessed to the property owner.

Q: What will that cost me?

A: Currently the rate is \$149.00 for the first 20 minutes of work and \$70.00 for each additional 20 minutes after that. The City will clear the sidewalks as quickly as possible. These fees reimburse the City for the costs to perform the work and administrate the program.

Q: The City cleared my sidewalk but I never got a violation notice!

A: General notification by publication (in a local newspaper) to all residents will be made before the first snowfall of the year that snow and ice must be removed from their sidewalk or they will be subject to the cost of removal. In addition, per the Ordinance, failure to receive the notice does not affect the validity of any actions taken.

Q: The City snowplows went through and plowed snow onto my cleared sidewalk. Am I responsible for clearing that?

A: Yes. We ask our drivers to be as careful as possible but some things are unavoidable and the streets have to get plowed. The snowplows must maintain reasonable speeds to effectively get the snow off the streets. We advise residents with sidewalks close to the street to plan appropriately when/if the snowplows throw additional snow on the sidewalk.

Q: I live on a corner property. Am I responsible for clearing both sides of my property including the ramps down to the street?

A: Yes. The Ordinance states “any public sidewalk adjacent to” the property shall be cleared by that owner. This includes any ramps leading down to the street.

Q: I am out of town, away from home, for days or weeks occasionally. What should I do about my snow removal during those times?

A: If you are away from home for any extended period of time, you should make arrangements with a friend, relative, neighbor or professional snow removal service to monitor the public sidewalk adjacent to your property and perform snow and ice removal as needed.

Q: I am elderly, disabled, or low income and need help clearing my sidewalk. Can I be excused from clearing my sidewalk?

A: You are still responsible to make sure your sidewalk is clear and safe for others to use. You should make arrangements with a friend, relative, neighbor, church group, community organization or professional snow removal service. The Tri-County Office on Aging (517-887-1440) may have volunteer assistance for the elderly.

Q: I live on a neighborhood street. Sometimes the City does not plow my street. Why do I have to clear the snow on my sidewalk?

A: Like many communities, the City has a defined policy for clearing snow from streets to enable safe travel for vehicles, with an emphasis on major arterial streets. Sidewalks are used by all types of people during all hours of the day. Keep in mind that children, the elderly, postal workers, and physically challenged people all rely on safe passage routes on sidewalks. If safe passage is not maintained, this creates a hardship for people and worse yet, causes some to use the street as an alternative.

Definitions

Your Sidewalk: Any public sidewalk that is adjacent to your property including any ramps leading down to the street whether at corners or mid-block.

Clearing Sidewalk: Shoveling and/or salting the adjacent sidewalks the full width of the sidewalk.

Safely Passable: A surface free from drifts, snow ridges and as much ice and snow pack as is practical and can be traveled free from harm or risk, secure from threat or danger, harm or loss. Safely passable does not require a surface to be completely dry.

Violation Notice: a notice issued by the City notifying property owners that they are in violation of the snow clearing ordinance and that they have 24 hours to clear their sidewalk. This notice is posted at the property.

Weather Event: a winter weather event that causes snow or ice to continuously accumulate.